

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----181315Z 108311 /41

O 181253Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1688

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 04513

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO DEFENSE FOR SECRETARY  
BROWN AND ASD/ISA. USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS FOR  
AMBASSADOR STRAUS-HUPE AND DEFAD.

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: UK, AWACS, NATO, OCON, MILI, GW  
SUBJECT: AWACS -- SECRETARY MULLEY CALLS IN CHAROE

SUMMARY. CHARQE (ACCOMPANIED BY POL-MIL ATTACHE) WAS  
CALLED IN BY MULLEY ON 17 MARCH TO DISCUSS AWACS. HE  
ASKED US NOT TO TAKE NOTES AND TO TREAT CERTAIN ASPECTS  
OF CONVERSATION AS "PRIVATE."

ONCE AGAIN NEED FOR AN ALLIANCE DECISION WAS UNDER-  
SCORED AND MULLEY REAFFIRMED EMPHATICALLY HMG'S  
INABILITY TO POSTPONE OO NO-GO DECISION ON NIMROD  
BEYOND END MARCH. END SUMMARY.

1. UPPERMOST RIGHT NOW IN MULLEY'S MIND IS HOW TO  
HANDLE ISSUE OF NATO AEW IN COMMONS DURING FORTHCOMING  
22-23 MARCH PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON DEFENSE WHITE  
PAPER. THIS MUST BE PLAYED OUT AGAINST BACKDROP OF  
FORTHCOMING SPECIAL DEFENSE MINISTERS MEETING ON NA/TO  
AEW AND EXPECTATION AMONG PARLIAMENTARIANS THAT NO  
DECISION FOR AWACS WILL BE AGREED. AS MULLEY SEES IT,  
THE GOVERNMENT CAN EXPECT TO BE PUSHED INTO A "DIFFICULT

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CORNER" BY CONSERVATIVES WHO ARE UNITED IN SUPPORT FOR  
NIMROD. (HOWEVER, THERE ARE OTHERS WHO ALSO WILL GIVE  
SUPPORT TO NIMROD -- MANY SITTING ON THE GOVERNMENT'S  
OWN BACKBENCHES.) UK LABOR UNIONS AND AEROSPACE IN-  
DUSTRY HAVE JOINED HANDS IN SUPPORT OF NIMROD AND MULLEY  
FEARS A CONSERVATIVE DRIVE IN COMMONS DEMANDING CATE-  
GORIC ASSURANCE THAT GOVERNMENT WILL SUPPORT NIMROD.

UNFORTUNATELY, ISSUE OF SUPPORTING A //NATO AEW OROORAM HAS BECOME ONE OF "GOING-AMERICAN" VERSUS "BUYINO BRITISH" -- AND THIS HAS POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS OF A MOST UNCOMFORTABLE KIND.

2. THE DEFENSE AND OVERSEAS POLICY COMMITTEE (DOPC) IS SCHEDULED TO MEET ON MARCH 23 TO OUT FINAL TOUCHES ON UK POSITION FOR BRUSSELS MEETING. MULLEY ASKS AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF LONG AND CLOSE BILATERAL CONSULTATION -- AND UK SUPPORT FOR AWACS -- FOR AS FULL A REPORT AS WASHINGTON CAN QIVE ON BILATERAL FRG-/US NATO AEW TALKS TO ENABLE HIM TO BRIEF DOPC AND CABINET. HE WANTS TO GO TO CABINET WITH FULL AND UNRESERVED DOPC BACKINQ. IF GOVERNMENT IS TO SOILL BLOOD OVER THIS ISSUE IT WANTS FIRST TO HEAR US AOORAIASAL OF LIKEL'Y PLAV AND OUTCOME OF 25 MARCH MEETING IN LIOHT OF /US-FRG BI-LATERAL TALKS. MULLEY INTIMATED WILLINONNESS TO TRY AND PRY SOME FURTHER STRETCH IN UK OOSITION IF HE CAN NET SOMETHING TANGIBLE AND SOECIFIC TO WORK ON. HE EMPHASIZED THAT CALLAGHAN'S PERSONAL BIAS FOR A LONG TIME HAS BEEN PRO-NIMROD REPEAT ORO-NIMROD. MULLEV SAID PM TOLD SCHMIDT DURING LONDON TALKS THAT HIS PERSONAL PREJUDICE FAVORED NIMROD.

3. COMMENT: MULLEY NOW FINDS HIMSELF WITHIN CABINET AND PARTY IN A MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION VIS-A-VIS AEW THAN WHEN HE SUCCEDED MASON AND EARLY GAVE HIS PERSONAL BACKING FOR AWACS. A WELL-ORCHESTRATED LABOR UNIONS/INDUSTRY COALITION HAS VERY SECRET

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SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED THE LONG OERIOD OF NATO INDECISION ON AEW TO GIVE REAL CLOUT TO OROOONENTS OF THE "SUPPORT UK TECHNOLOGY" THROUGH "BUY BRITISH" LOBBY. ADDITIONALLY, MULLEY MUST NOW CONTENT WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF DISTANTLY RELATED ISSUES (THE GENERALLY DEPRESSING ECONOMIC SITUATION, THE DEADLOCK OVER DEVOLUTION, THE FORTHCOMING CUTS IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE TOGETHER WITH THE PERSISTENTLY HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT, ET CETERA) IN HIS EFFORTS TO HOLD SUPPORT FOR AWACS BY A GOVERNMENT UNCERTAIN OF ITS OOLITICAL STRENGTH AND WITH EVERY DESIRE TO AVOID UNNECESSARY TESTING OF IT.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE OR NATO BRUSSELS.

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4. WITH THE DEFENSE WHITE PAPER DEBATE SCHEDULED JUST BEFORE THE SPECIAL BRUSSELS MEETING AND BELIEVING THAT HIS SUPPORT FOR AWACS WILL COME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK FROM ALMOST ALL QUARTERS (AND FEELING OBLIVIOUS IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO GIVE MORE THAN JUST A CURSORY ANSWER TO THOSE ATTACKING NATO AEW), MULLEY WITHOUT QUESTION IS SEEKING ASSURANCE FROM THE US THAT WE HAVE A REALISTIC APPRAISAL AND A REAL FEELING OF CONFIDENCE WE CAN PULL TOGETHER A NATO AWACS PROGRAM. THE ISSUE IS WE WILL GET A GREEN RATHER THAN AN AMBER LIGHT ON 25 MARCH.

5. IF WE CAN CONVEY A SENSE OF OUR OWN CONFIDENCE TO HMG THEN THE GOVERNMENT'S TACTICS BETWEEN NOW AND THE END OF THE MONTH ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL BE TO PRESENT A SOLID FRONT OF SUPPORT FOR NATO AWACS. OTHERWISE IT WILL SIMPLY TRY TO FUDGE THE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS IN COMMONS AND BY SO DOING SIGNAL ITS BELIEF THAT NATO AWACS IS NOT ON -- A MESSAGE WHICH WILL BE CLEARLY SEEN BY ALL THE OTHER ALLIES. ALMOST CERTAINLY THIS WOULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE BRUSSELS MEETING. IN SHORT, WE BELIEVE MULLEY SEES HIS IMMEDIATE BROAD OPTIONS AS (A) GIVING CONTINUED DECLARATORY SUPPORT IN COMMONS FOR NATO AWACS -- BUT RESISTING BEING DRAWN  
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INTO GIVING DETAILS (UNDER THE PRETEXT OF WAITING FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE MARCH 25 MEETING); (B) USING COMMONS

DEFENSE DEBATE AS A PLATFORM FOR ENOAGINO POSITIVELY AND HEAD-ON ISSUES SUCH AS MULTINATIONAL COOOERATION/ COLLABORATIONS, AWACS AS AN ELEMENT IN NATO STANDARDIZA- TION, SPECIALIZATION, ET CETERA. THE GOVERNMENT'S THRUST WOULD BE AIMED AT DEFUSING OUSH FOR NIMROD BY ARGUING IMPORTANCE AND BENEFIT TO NATO OF BROADER OAINS FOR ALLIANCE COHESIVENESS/SOLIDARITY, ET CETERA, TO BE GARNERED BY A COLLECTIVE DECISION TO SUPPORT NATO AWACS; OR (C) TAKING AN APPROACH DESIGNED TO LIMIT "DAMAGE".TO GOVERNMENT BY PUBLICLY ACCEPTINO NOW THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF A PRO-AWACS DECISION IS SMALL. THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD OF SUPOORT FOR A COLLECTIVE NATO DECISION WOULD BE SHOWN TO BE SO WELL ESTABLISHED THE UK IS JUSTIFIED IN ANNOUNCINO,DURINO THE DEFENSE DEBATE ITSELF, THAT NIMROD APPEARS TO BE THE LIKELY OUTCOME FOR BRITAIN OF THE 25 MARCH DISCUSSIONS. THE GOVERN- MENT WOULD STRESS THAT NIMROD WOULD BE MADE INTER- OPERABLE WITH OUR E-3A AND/OR E-2C AEW AIRCRAFT AND THAT UK IS DEDICATING NIMROD AEW TO NATO. THE GOVERN- MENT WOULD GET A GOOD PAT ON THE BACK AND STRONO POPULAR SUPPORT IF IT TOOK THIS TACK.

6. THE PRESENT INCLINATION IS OPTION (A); MANY POLITICIANS, TRADE UNIONISTS AND INDUSTRIALISTS WOULD BE RELIEVED IF THE GOVERNMENT WENT FOR OOTION (C). FROM THE US PERSPECTIVE, OPTION (B) IS MUCH TO BE PREFERRED -- BUT WE ARE UNLIKELY TO INDUCE IT UNLESS WE CAN CONVINCE LONDON THAT OUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS IN BRINGINQ ALONG THE OTHER ALLIES ON 25 MARCH ARE GOOD.

7. TO AT LEAST DETER THE BRITISH FROM THE STRONG TEMPTATION NOW TO TAKE OPTION (C), WE RECOMMEND THAT MULLEY BE GIVEN, ASAP, AS MUCH DETAIL AS OOSSIBLE  
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OF THE REAL STATE OF PLAY AS WE GAUQE IT. /UK MOD VIEW IS WE DO NOT HAVE TO SELL AWACS TO THEM SINCE THEY HAVE LONG BEEN PERSUADED, BUT TO KEEP POLITICAL SUPPORT ALIVE WE SHOULD ENGAGE BRITISH AS IF THEY ARE OUR PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF NATO AEW. THE DANOER WE RUN BY LETTING THE GOVERNMENT PUT ON A HALF-HEARTED OPTION (A) TYPE PERFORMANCE -- JUST BEFORE SO CRITICAL A MEETING AS THE 25 MARCH GATHERINQ -- IS THAT IT MAY WELL LEAD TO OPTION (C) IN ANY CASE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WE ARE OURSELVES CONVINCED THAT NATO AWACS IS NOT ON, AT LEAST FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, WE MAY GET SOME POLITICAL "OAINS" BY LETTINO UK OFF THE HOOK EARLY ENOUQH TO SAVE THE GOVERNMENT FROM ENOAOINO IN WHAT COULD TURN OUT TO BE A RATHER COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE

AND DIVISIVE SUB-DEBATE WITHIN THE DEFENSE DEBATE  
ON WHETHER, FOR EXAMPLE, THE UK (OR EUROPE) IS HEADED  
TO BECOMING AN INDUSTRIAL SATELLITE OF THE US AND OF  
LOSING ITS HIGH-TECHNOLOGY SKILLS. (CALLAGHAN WAS ASKED  
SUCH A QUESTION IN COMMONS ON HIS RETURN FROM VISITING  
PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE PM REPLIED, "... I HAVE STRONG  
VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT. ... I HAVE NO DESIRE TO SEE  
THIS COUNTRY (UK) BECOME AN INDUSTRIAL SATELLITE OF THE  
US. ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO OUR MARITIME PROTECTION,

NOTE BY OC/T:NOT PASSED DEFENSE OR NATO BRUSSELS.

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EXDIS

WE SHOULD, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, ALTHOUGH BY ALL MEANS IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR ALLIES, BE ABLE TO LOOK AFTER  
OURSELVES." MULLEY SPECIFICALLY BROUGHT THIS ANSWER  
TO OUR ATTENTION, REMARKING THAT IT REFLECTED SOME  
ASPECT OF THE DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING HIM.)

8. OF ONE THING WE ARE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN: THE MOOLEWE AT ALMOST EVERY  
LEVEL WOULD FIND RELIEF IF CIRCUM-  
STANCES BROUGHT OPTION (C) TO THE FORE. ON THE OTHER  
HAND, THE BRITISH ARE GOOD TEAM PLAYERS AND THE GOVERN-  
MENT IS WILLING TO TAKE THE FLACK OF STAYING IN OUR COR-  
NER AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH. MULLEY HAS  
INDICATED HMG WILL REFUTE VIGOROUSLY ANY IMPUTATION  
THAT IT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FORCING AN IMPOSSIBLE TIME  
CONSTRAINT ON NATO -- AND THEREBY BRINGING DOWN AWACS.

9. BRITISH ARE FEARFUL THAT MUTUAL RECRIMINATIONS COULD

DO MORE DAMAGE TO ALLIANCE THAN ACCEPTANCE NOW OF  
SHELVING NATO AWACS UNLESS WE ARE CERTAIN OF A SUCCESS-  
FUL OUTCOME. THEY ARGUE THAT IN AEW CONTEXT AN INTER-  
OPERABLE US-UK AWACS-NIMROD SYSTEM MAY NOT BE SUCH A  
BAD "FALL BACK" SOLUTION AFTER ALL.

10. IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS A TOUOH  
POLITICAL PROBLEM AND ONE WHICH IN THE TEST OF CIRCUM-  
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STANCES IT MAY NOT WIN. THE OUESTION NOW IS WHETHER  
WE ARE WILLING FRANKLY TO LAY OUT THE US ASSESSMENT OF  
THE NATO AWACS SITUATION TO THE BRITISH BEFORE THE  
DEFENSE DEBATE BEGINS ON 22 MARCH. WE RECOMMEND THAT  
WASHINGTON QIVE CONSIDERATION TO THE BOINTS RAISED BY  
MULLEY AND THE DEOREE TO WHICH WE NOW MAY WISH TO LEAN OR  
NOT LEAN ON HMG TO HOLD FAST.

11. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON OUIDANCE ON HOW TO  
RESPOND TO THE MULLEY OLEA ASAP.

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE OR NATO BRUSSELS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AWACS, AIR DEFENSE, WARNING SYSTEMS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), MEETING REPORTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Subject:** AWACS -- SECRETARY MULLEY CALLS IN CHAROE SUMMARY. CHAROE (ACCOMPANIED BY POL-MIL ATTACHE) WAS CALLED IN BY MULLEY ON 17 MARCH TO DISCUSS AWACS.  
**TAGS:** OCON, MILI, UK, GE, NATO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvkey:** odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/6e09eeb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
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